

Influenza Surveillance in San Diego County

Influenza surveillance continues year round in San Diego County. Public Health Services, Epidemiology and Immunization Services Branch works with area hospitals, clinics, laboratories and medical providers, to monitor the occurrence and impact of influenza in San Diego County.

Background

Influenza can cause significant morbidity and mortality, and can impact hospital emergency departments and other medical providers. Public Health surveillance focuses on detecting & identifying the current circulating strains, investigating outbreaks, monitoring influenza-related ICU cases and deaths, and measuring the impact of the disease in the community.

Goals of Influenza Surveillance

The County's influenza surveillance program has the following goals:

- Identification of when and where influenza activity is occurring in the County
- Determining which types of influenza viruses are circulating
- Determining how well matched the seasonal vaccine is to the circulating strains
- Describing the impact influenza is having on the population
- Measuring the impact influenza is having on emergency departments
- Identifying influenza-associated deaths in the County
- Identifying outbreaks and assisting in disease control

Surveillance Activities

1. Influenza Virus Detection and Characterization

- Providing rapid antigen influenza tests to sentinel clinics
- Tracking positive laboratory detections reported by the medical community
- Confirmation and sub-typing of positives at Public Health Laboratory (PHL)
- Forwarding specimens to CDPH or CDC for genetic strain typing

2. Reportable Influenza

- Severe influenza; defined as any confirmed influenza by laboratory testing in a patient that has been hospitalized in the ICU and/or died
- Outbreaks of Influenza, or Influenza-like-illness (2 or more non-household members with similar symptoms)

3. Surveillance & Data Collection

- Percent of influenza-like-illness visits at emergency departments
- Review of death certificates for influenza
- Review of other respiratory indicators from syndromic surveillance data sources

4. Surveillance Updates and Information

- The weekly *Influenza Watch* surveillance update is emailed to interested persons
- Updates as needed to the medical community through CAHAN alerts
- Information used in HHSA reports and press releases

Request for Participation

Physicians and laboratories are encouraged to participate by reporting positive influenza detections and submitting specimens from patients in the ICU or who died who tested positive for influenza. Please report detections to the Epidemiology Program by fax to: 858-715-6458.

For more information about influenza surveillance in San Diego County, please contact the Epi Program at 619-692-8499 or EpiDiv.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov. For laboratory questions, please contact Jill Giesick at 619-692-8500.